

What is Family Decision Making ?

Family Decision Making (FDM) engages family and service providers by sharing information and decision making to reach a common goal of ensuring the safety and protection of children. These meetings are voluntary and require consent from the parent and social worker.



Family Group Conference

Format of the meeting:

Introductions
Information sharing
Private family time
Plan presentation and review

- Works well when multiple issues must be addressed
- Goals of the meeting are determined at the time of the referral to a Family Group Conference
- Can be a large meeting with many participants
- Family and extended family participate in the planning session
- Coordinator prepares participants for their role in the meeting
- Service providers are involved in the first part of the meeting to share information
- Family has private time to create plan without professionals in the room
- Social worker reviews the plan to ensure the safety of the child
- Meeting can last three hours to a full day

Family Support Meeting

Format of the meeting:

Introductions
Goals
Strengths
Concerns
Plan

- Best utilized when specific issues need to be addressed (i.e. safety plan for the child to return home)
- Goal of meeting is discussed in detail as part of the agenda
- Parent identifies family and service providers who should attend
- Family takes the lead in planning with input from service providers
- All participants remain in the room throughout the meeting
- Generally a two hour meeting



There are two types of meetings:

- Family Group Conference
- Family Support Meeting

Benefits of a meeting :

- Draws on the combined wisdom of the family and service providers
- Family members participate in shared decision making for the child
- Everyone in the family hears the relevant information and helps make good decisions for children
- An extensive relative search can bring new family members to the table
- Family members are part of the safety and support plan
- Meetings often result in increased contact between children and extended family members
- Relationships are improved between family, service providers and social workers
- A Family Group Conference results in a stable permanent placement for the child
- Family Group Conference participants receive a final copy of the plan



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